

**Washington, Mar 28, 2008** - U.S. Congressman Mike Pence issued the following statement announcing he will not request earmarks for Fiscal Year 2009:

**“After years of wasteful government spending, it is clear to most Americans that the way Congress spends the people’s money is broken, especially when it comes to earmarks. After years of attempting to reform the earmarking system from within, I have decided that I can no longer be a party to a deeply flawed system, and therefore, I will not be making any appropriation requests for Fiscal Year 2009. Over the course of the next year I intend to work closely with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to achieve meaningful and measurable reforms to the earmark process in the House.**

**“The time for an earmark moratorium has come. Last year, altogether, the spending bills passed by Congress included some 11,000 earmarks. Those earmarks totaled more than \$14 billion in cost and included countless examples of wasteful spending. In last year’s omnibus spending bill, nearly 300 unexamined earmarks costing more than \$800 million were dropped in at the last minute, in the middle of the night, immune to public debate or scrutiny until after the fact.**

**“This is not to say that all earmarking is wrong. Earmark spending can serve a purpose, and I believe it is part of Congress’s authority to spend the people’s money in ways both large and small. However, earmark spending must be done wisely, openly, fairly and responsibly, and in recent years it has not met the high standard the American people demand.**

**“Throughout my career in Congress, I have sought to meet that high standard. I have never traded my vote for an earmark request. I have led in transparency by being among the first in Congress to post appropriation requests on my web site. For years I have advocated for earmark reform and have led efforts by House conservatives to enact budget process reforms under Republican majorities. I also have supported bipartisan efforts to enact further earmark reforms under Democratic control. I have made every effort to press for reform within the system, but I have come to the conclusion that for the next year I must remove myself from that system and work to restore public confidence in the earmarking process through my own example.**

**“Earlier this year, House Republicans challenged House Democrats to join us in a bipartisan earmark moratorium during which Congress would conduct public hearings and make recommendations that would forever change the way that Congress earmarks funds. Unfortunately, House Democrats turned down that challenge, and to date House Democrats have taken no further action toward imposing a moratorium or instituting needed reforms. Despite the bipartisan support of all three leading Presidential candidates, yesterday the Senate rejected a one-year earmark moratorium as well.**

**“In light of recent developments, it is clear that the current system of earmarking will go forward unchallenged. It allows earmarks to be requested for projects hundreds of miles away from the districts that the requesting member represents, and it has led to earmarks being tied to waste and instances of public corruption.**

**“It is time to end earmarking as we know it. We must restore public confidence in the way we spend the people’s money. It is now up to individual Members of Congress to lead by example and build a groundswell of support for genuine earmark reform. I commend my many House and Senate colleagues who have already announced a one-year moratorium on earmark requests, and I hope that together our message will be embraced as much by the leadership of Congress as it is by the American people.”**